



arts connect

Dance Shakes

Ask the children to find a space and hold one hand up in the air & shake it for eight counts – 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8, then repeat the other arm. Now pick up one leg & give that eight shakes, then the same with the other leg.

Quickly practice the above sequence all the way through without pausing between each body part.

Now ask the children to repeat the pattern of shakes, but as soon as they have finished the eight shakes for each part of the body they have to start again (no pause) but with 4 'shakes' for each limb. Then two, then just one!

(You may wish to perform the one shake section twice as this enables it to fit with any music much better, or with less experienced children you may find it easier to repeat 2 counts.)

Once the children have mastered the sequence, then repeat the whole pattern a little bit faster!

You can try this faster & faster until it's impractical but insist that the children stay with the music as some children are tempted to think of it as a race.

Ask the children to think of other body parts they can use instead of hands & feet.

To make this easier try keeping to an upper body part followed by a lower body one, e.g. one elbow, then the other – followed by one knee then the other.

To make it more complex select 4 entirely different body part, e.g. right shoulder, big toe on left foot, right thumb, bottom...

The children could either work individually or in pairs so that they perform in unison.

Repeat the pattern of 8 shakes, 4 shakes, 2 shakes, 1 shake (twice) with the new selection of body parts – start slowly to allow the coordination to settle in... then repeat & speed up!

Ask the children to think of using different levels.

The 3 levels in dance are high, medium & low.

They have probably continued to stand on the spot to perform their new 'shakes' – but they could include stretching up, down, to the side, behind them or forward; they might balance using their hands on the floor if they are shaking a foot (thus allowing them to shake the foot higher than usual); they might even include some jumps to get extra high!

If you want to take this further they could...

Change the shaking – it could be stretching, curling, bending, flicking, squeezing.

Mirroring - face a partner (appropriate distance) & mirror as they perform their sequence.

Try shaking more than one body part at a time – this really pushes all their co-ordination buttons!